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TO RUEHC/SECSTATE WASHDC PRIORITY 2300  
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UNCLAS SECTION 01 OF 02 CAIRO 000724

SENSITIVE  
SIPDIS

DEPT FOR AIAG (DAVID WINN), DEPT PASS TO AID (DENNIS CARROLL)

E.O. 12958: N/A  
TAGS: [TBIO](#) [KFLU](#) [KSTH](#) [PGOV](#) [ECON](#) [KSCA](#) [EAGR](#) [KISL](#) [KIRF](#) [USDA](#)  
APHIS EG  
SUBJECT: EGYPT:LET'S KILL ALL THE PIGS

Sensitive but Unclassified. Please handle accordingly.

11. (SBU) Summary and comment: While Egyptian authorities have been responding to the virus formerly known as Swine Flu (and now known as H1N1) in measured ways -stepping up a mostly moribund program to move swine out of urban areas to the countryside, testing swine and swine workers for the H1N1 virus, imposing restrictions on swine movement, and contemplating travel restrictions on those seeking to enter Egypt from affected countries- the crisis has re-kindled the "pig debate," and members of the People's Assembly (Parliament) from both sides of the aisle, including those affiliated with the Muslim Brotherhood, are calling for the slaughter of all swine in Egypt. While it is questionable whether the GOE could kill all the pigs here even if it decided to do so, the issue has serious implications in a country where religion and politics mix early and often, and reports are coming in that some Governorates have already begun killing pigs. End summary and comment.

#### THE CALL TO THE ABBATOIR

12. (SBU) While Egypt has no confirmed human cases of H1N1, several members of the Parliament have called for the slaughter of all pigs in Egypt. Abdul Rehim El Ghoul, MP and member of the Agriculture Committee, told El Mehwar TV recently that he supported proposals to execute all pigs in Egypt. The Muslim Brotherhood (MB) is leading the anti-pig chorus, and its rhetoric is spiced with a healthy criticism of the GOE's failure to comply with a longstanding Presidential Proclamation to move the pigs out of the cities. The MB's Parliamentary Bloc Media Secretary, Dr. Hamdy Hassan, has engaged in media blitz focusing on the fear of the virus evolving, via pigs, into a human epidemic for which there is no treatment. In a troubling development, Al Masry Al Youm (AMAY), an independent newspaper, is reporting this morning that Parliament's Speaker, Fathi Sorour, has urged Prime Minister Nazif to begin the slaughter of pigs immediately. AMAY is also reporting that some Governors have taken matters into their own hands, and pig killing has already begun in Kalubia, Helwan, Beheira, Suez and Minya, albeit on a small scale.

#### WILL THERE BE A MASS SLAUGHTER?

13. The logistics of a mass pig slaughter are staggering. Hassan claims there are 400,000 pigs in the greater Cairo area. Hard numbers are difficult to come by, but sources in the Ministries of Health and Agriculture believe the swine population in the Cairo, Giza and Dakahlia Governorates alone may be 300,000. The Egyptian Ministry of State for Environmental Affairs has identified nine areas where pigs are now raised, five of which are in Cairo. And no one knows how many pigs are in the Minya, Sohag, and Assiut Governorates, home to large Christian populations.

#### A PUBLIC RECEPTIVE TO A CALL FOR PIG BLOOD

14. (SBU) The H1N1 crisis comes at a time of heated political debate concerning and public concern about Egypt's continuing problems with Avian Influenza (AI). With 68 confirmed human cases here since the disease emerged in early 2006, including seventeen this year, Egypt has lately had its fair share of bad Bird Flu news. Three of this year's AI victims died in the last few days, and the GOE is working on new legislation to deal with the AI problem, possibly including enhanced poultry movement controls, heavy penalties for non-disclosure of outbreaks, and a compensation scheme for the commercial sector. Comment: While most of those calling for pig culling have yet to make the case that the presence of a large pig population in a country where H5N1 is endemic creates a recipe for a disaster, it probably won't be long until they do. And whatever the merits of that argument, the public will likely be receptive to it. End comment.

#### WHEN PIGS FLY

15. (SBU) Until today, the GOE has taken measured steps to deal with the H1N1 crisis. It is kick starting the mostly moribund program to move swine from the urban areas to the countryside, testing swine and swine workers for the new virus, imposing restrictions on swine movement, and contemplating travel restrictions on those seeking to enter Egypt from affected countries. NAMRU-3 is assisting with the swine worker testing. And so far, most of the "Let's kill all the pigs" rhetoric pays lip service to the notion of fair compensation for pig farmers. If the GOE's handling of the AI crisis is a harbinger of things to come with H1N1, it seems unlikely the GOE

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will have either the political will to cull all the pigs, or the ability to fund a compensation program if it does so. This said, pigs are not chickens, and it appears Egypt may well deal with this pandemic threat very differently.

Scobey